

Greetings to _____

The Pioneers



BY
BERT HUFFMAN
LANGDON, Alta
1925

THE PIONEERS

Softly hooded lights are glowing: sweet the music in their ears—
Ah, the Winds of Memory blowing 'round the gathering Pioneers!
Memories beat like tides of ocean as they think of days of yore—
Days of Friendship, fine Devotion, of the comrades gone before.
Have the Years repaid their daring? Have our hearts and hands
been hard?

"Yes! Those days of Westward faring were their own, their rich
reward."

Did they ask if trails were broken yonder on that far frontier?
Did they ask for sign or token, safety, comfort, help or cheer?
Did they falter, wince or tremble at the thought of untrod miles?
Every eye its tear dissembles, every young face wreathed in smiles!
Tame old East, you could not hold them in your narrow, winding
lanes;

Wilder destinies would fold them yonder on the beckoning plains!
Wilder, wider visions sweeping through the blood of dauntless Youth
Urge them, hurl them, wildly leaping in the fray for Law and Truth!

Tame old East, you did not doubt them, carved from your rugged
stuff?

Never yet, did foeman rout them, never have they cried "Enough".
Young and stalwart, like wild Centaurs, came they to the unknown
plains.

Charting trails for hordes to follow from yon narrow, eastern lanes.
Unknown dangers lay before them, unknown foes in ambush lie;
By the Pioneers who bore them, they will win . . . or they will die!
Westward, Westward, never veering, bronzed and fearless, wild and
free,

Came they like Ulysses, steering into some vast, chartless sea!

Did they call it then, Alberta? Did they know Saskatchewan?
Ah, 'twas all one British vista, fairest that the sun above on!
British courage, British vision, burned in all the throbbing veins
Of that glorious host which carried Magna Charta to the plains!

We, who tread the paths of pleasure—who, on winds of ease are
tossed—

Could we know the full, fierce measure of the blood and tears it cost?
We, who reap the harvests golden—who in peace and calm draw
breath—

Would we drink Fate's vintage older which they quaffed—even
unto Death?

Would we, of a later breeding, tamer spirits, softer ways,
Take our lives in hand, unheeding, as they did in those far days?
We, who walk bright streets of Magic; we, who bask in heedless
bliss—

Would we tread the trails so tragic, bloodstained, to a time like this?

If we bask in Peace and Order in a domain without flaw—
They pushed back this savage border with the white light of the Law!
If we reap a ripe fruition—lands and bonds and heaped-up gold—
They unlocked, with fine precision, all these riches yet untold!
Land of Comfort! Land of Beauty! Land of radiant fire-side cheer!
Heap the fullest meed of Duty to your Splendid Pioneer!

Langdon, January 16, 1925.

